THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH): (a) to (d) As per census, 2001 there are 3,72,89,729 widows and 23,42,930 divorcee/separated women in the country. Under NREGA, all rural households including single women are entitled to guaranteed 100 days employment. Under Indira Gandhi National Social Assistance Programme, all persons who are 65 years of age or older and belong to BPL category are eligible for a pension of Rs. 200/- per month from Government of India. The Scheme was expended in February, 2009 to include widows in the age group of 40-64. The Government also runs the Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) for skill upgradation and generation of livelihood options for assetless and marginalized women. Besides, the Government is implementing two shelter based schemes, namely, Swadhar and Short Stay Homes which provide emergency outreach services to women in difficult circumstances who do not have societal/family support of independent means of income.

Pawning of wives and daughters in Bundelkhand

1978. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the media reports of poor people and farmers of drought hit Bundelkhand and other parts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh pawning their wives and daughters on stamp paper have come to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, whether Government has conducted any inquiry into such reports;

(c) if so, the outcome of the inquiry; and

(d) the remedial measures Government has taken or proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH): (a) to (d) The National Commission for Women (NCW) has constituted an inquiry committee to inquire into such incidents of Bundelkhand region. The Committee has submitted its preliminary report. Since the root cause of such social evils is poverty, the Government has advised Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) to focus their activities in the region so that gainful economic employment opportunities can be created. Besides, the Government has advised Ministry of Panchayati Raj and NCW to organise sensitisation programmes for the members of Panchayati Raj institutions of the region and disseminate information in respect of the schemes/programmes of the Central and State Governments. The Government of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have also been advised to taken action for mitigating hardships and reducing poverty.

Domestic violence against women

1979. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state: